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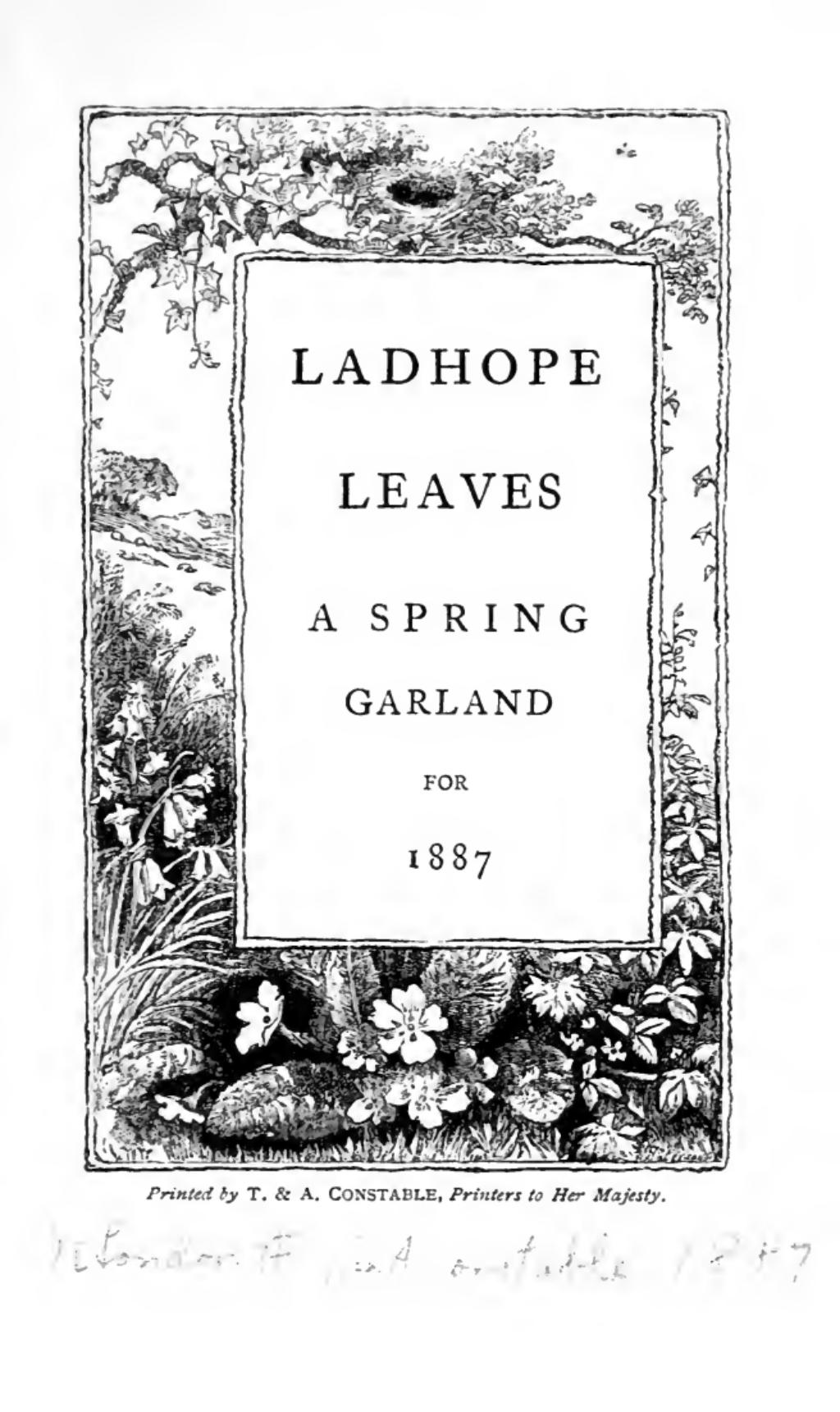
A SPRING GARLAND

FOR

1887.







LADHOPE
LEAVES
A SPRING
GARLAND

FOR

1887

Printed by T. & A. CONSTABLE, Printers to Her Majesty.

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‘What fashion will you wear the garland of?’

Much Ado about Nothing.

‘I would I had some flowers o’ the spring that might
Become your time of day.

Daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes
Or Cytherea’s breath ; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength.’

The Winter’s Tale.



ASHESTIEL.

(From 'Fors Clavigera,' by permission of the Author.)

Brantwood, October 10th, 1883.

INOW take up my immediate subject of enquiry, the effect upon Scott's own mind of the natural scenery of the native land he loved so dearly. His life, let me first point out to you, was, in all the joyful strength of it, spent in the valley of the Tweed. Edinburgh was his school and his office; but his home was always by Tweedside: and more perfectly so, because in three several places during the three clauses of life. You must remember also the cottage at Lasswade for the first years of marriage, and Sandy Knowe for his

childhood; but, allowing to Smailholm Tower and Roslin Glen whatever collateral influence they may rightly claim over the babe and the bridegroom, the constant influences of home remain divided strictly into the three æras at Rosebank, Ashestiel, and Abbotsford.

Rosebank, on the lower Tweed, gave him his close knowledge of the district of Flodden Field: and his store of foot-traveller's interest in every glen of Ettrick, Yarrow, and Liddel-water.

The vast tract of country to which these streams owe their power is composed of a finely-grained dark and hard sandstone, whose steep beds are uniformly and simultaneously raised into masses of upland, which nowhere present any rugged or broken masses of crag, like those of our Cumberland mountains, and are rarely steep enough anywhere to break the grass by weathering; a moderate shaly—or, rather, gritty—slope of two or three hundred feet opposite Ashestiel itself, being notice-

able enough, among the rounded monotony of general form, to receive the separate name of 'the Slidders.' Towards the bottom of a dingle, here and there, a few feet of broken bank may show what the hills consist of; but the great waves of them rise against the horizon without a single peak, crest, or cleft to distinguish one from another, though in their true scale of mountain strength heaved into heights of 1500 or 2000 feet; and covering areas of three or four square leagues for each of the surges. The dark rock weathers easily into surface soil, which forms for the greater part good pasture, with interspersed patches of heath or peat, and Liddesdale-way, rushy and sedgy moorland, good for little to man or beast.

.

As I drove from Abbotsford to Ashestiel, Tweed and Ettrick were both in flood; not dun nor wrathful, but in the clear fulness of their perfect strength; and from the bridge of Ettrick I saw the

two streams join, and the Tweed for miles down the vale, and the Ettrick for miles up among his hills,—each of them, in the multitude of their windless waves, a march of infinite light, dazzling,—interminable,—intervaled indeed with eddies of shadow, but, for the most part, gliding paths of sunshine, far-swept beside the green glow of their level inches, the blessing of them, and the guard:—the stately moving of the many waters, more peaceful than their calm, only mighty, their rippled spaces fixed like orient clouds, their pools of pausing current binding the silver edges with a gloom of amber and gold; and all along their shore, beyond the sward, and the murmurous shingle, processions of dark forest, in strange majesty of sweet order, and unwounded grace of glorious age.

The house of Ashestiel itself is only three or four miles above this junction of Tweed and Ettrick. It has been sorrowfully changed since Sir Walter's

death, but the essential make and set of the former building can still be traced. There is more excuse for Scott's flitting to Abbotsford than I had guessed, for *this* house stands, conscious of the river rather than commanding it, on a brow of meadowy bank, falling so steeply to the water that nothing can be seen of it from the windows. Beyond, the pasture-land rises steep three or four hundred feet against the northern sky, while behind the house, south and east, the moorlands lift themselves in gradual distance to still greater height, so that virtually neither sunrise nor sunset can be seen from the deep-nested dwelling. A tricklet of stream wavers to and fro down to it from the moor, through a grove of entirely natural wood, — oak, birch, and ash, fantastic and bewildering, but nowhere gloomy or decayed, and carpeted with anemone. Between this wild avenue and the house the old garden remains as it used to be, large, gracious, and tranquil; its

high walls swept round it in a curving line like a war rampart, following the ground ; the fruit-trees, trained a century since, now with grey trunks a foot wide, flattened to the wall like sheets of crag ; the strong bars of their living trellis charged, when I saw them, with clusters of green-gage, soft bloomed into gold and blue, and of orange-pink magnum bonum, and crowds of ponderous pear, countless as leaves. Some open space of grass and path, now all redesigned for modern needs, must always have divided the garden from what was properly the front of the house, where the main entrance is now, between advanced wings, of which only the westward one is of Sir Walter's time : its ground-floor being the drawing-room, with his own bedroom of equal size above, cheerful and luminous both, enfilading the house front with their large side windows, which commanded the sweep of Tweed down the valley, and some high masses of Ettrick Forest beyond, this

view being now mostly shut off by the opposite wing, added for symmetry! But Sir Walter saw it fair through the morning clouds when he rose, holding himself, nevertheless, altogether regardless of it, when once at work. At Ashestiel and Abbotsford alike, his work-room is strictly a writing-office, what windows they have being designed to admit the needful light, with an extremely narrow vista of the external world. Courtyard at Abbotsford, and bank of young wood beyond: nothing at Ashestiel but the green turf of the opposite fells with the sun on it, if sun there were, and silvery specks of passing sheep.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sir Walter Scott". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a prominent 'W' at the beginning.



OLD ENGLAND IN THE SEA.

A JUBILEE HYMN.

ROUND the rocks and reefs of Britain
Chafes and wreathes the restless tide ;
Verdure-clad and crowned with flowers,
Decorated as a bride,
God-preserved, on strong foundations,
Noblest midst a thousand nations,
Stands old England in the Sea.

What though snow-flakes fall about her,
Ocean threat to break his chain,
Heavens darken, tempests gather,
Undismayed she will remain.

Faction fleeteth as the shower,
Skies will brighten, cease to lower
O'er old England in the Sea.

Far away in distant regions,
Wheresoever breezes blow,
Where the tropic sun is blazing,
Where unthawed lies arctic snow,
More dispersed than any other,
Children yet, who claim as mother
Dear old England in the Sea.

Thousand-strong, though unseen fibres
Interpenetrating run
Through that scattered race, compacting
All inseparably in one;
One as notes in chorus swelling,
Everywhere the triumph telling
Of old England in the Sea.

Lo ! this year in loyal Britain
Gains our Queen her jubilee :
God preserve her ! all the people
Sing with unanimity.
Tell abroad the stirring story,
Spread throughout the world the glory,
Of old England in the Sea.

S. Baring-Gould.



IN CADDONFOOT CHURCHYARD.

A SONNET.

BEAUTIFUL spot! thrice hallowed are the
dead
That slumber here midst Nature's love-
liness;
Summer hath so her sweet enchantments spread
That Death seems holier in abodes like this.
Only the wild bird's note, the hymning river,
Break the hushed calm where thy lone sleepers
lie,
Whilst, grouped around, the solemn hills seem
ever
Gazing in supplication to the sky.

What is all learned philosophy or creed
To the pure simple faith that here finds birth? .
Here, where the soul, in its unvarnished need,
Turns to that little church, and feels that earth,
Even in this beauty, doth but gild the way
To where its longings seek still brighter day?

Thomas Kennedy.



THE SEVEN SPEARS OF WEDDERBURN.

AN INCIDENT IN BORDER STORY.

THE Seven Spears of Wedderburn,
High stalwart lads are they ;
And in the fun and 'neath the moon
Ride foremost to the fray.

In many a Border foray,
O'er many a heather hill,
The Spears have glanced, one after one,
From Blackadder to Till.

And when the sun was westering
On Flodden's crested height,
The Seven Spears of Wedderburn
Gave first shock in the fight.

The minions now of Albany
Are preying on the land ;
The Laird of Home is done to death,
And D'Arcy hath command

In all the Merse and Lothians,
Where only Home should reign :
That Frenchman on his fleetest steed
Shall ne'er win back again.

So hot and fast gay D'Arcy rides ;
Behind him hot rides he,
The youngest Spear of Wedderburn
Fierce o'er the benty lea.

Now but one leap to clear the hag,
And the foremost horse has won ;
Or the gallant with the comely face
Looks no more on the fun.

One fatal plunge, and D'Arcy
Is helpless in the moss:
Now stay thee, Jesu Saviour !
With the comfort of the Cross !

For a ruthless hand is on thee,
Like a tiger in its ire ;
And vengeance in the Borderer
Burns with a lurid fire.

And now he turns and homeward rides,
But from his saddle-bow
There dangles by its yellow locks
A knightly face and brow,—

So loved of dames and damosels
In the gay Court of France,
Now strung in gleeful triumph
'Neath the savage Border lance.

And many a mourning maiden
Has shed the bitter tear
For D'Arcy's fate, the gallant knight,
And Beauty's Chevalier.

What shall be said of thee, young Home,
And of thy deadly turn ?
What shall wipe out the bloody stain
On the Spear of Wedderburn ?

J. Veitch.



RETROSPECT.

LONLY bends the breeze-kissed grass,
Fair that still and sunlit wood,
Drowsy breezes as they pass
Woo my heart to dreamy mood.

Through the mazes of my dream—
Dream of days that used to be—
At my feet Tweed's silver stream
Makes the sweetest melody.

Sweet as music heard of old,
In the golden years long gone ;
Fair as then the flowers unfold,
With a beauty all their own.

Unchanged ! as when of old we met,
Together trod this flowery way—
The trysting-spot of lovers yet ;
My love, ah me ! long miles away.

Yet not long miles of space between,
Or swiftly rolling seas divide ;
A nameless sense of change unseen,
Our hearts united—severed wide.

Hand-clasped we stood together here,
And love between us strove in vain
To bring our sundered spirits near ;
We sadly watched in mutual pain.

‘ Farewell,’ he said, and turned away ;
‘ Farewell,’ I whispered, yet my heart,
All weak and human, would delay
To take the truer, better part.

Ah, well I knew 'twas better so ;
Our parting moments should be brief ;
Yet, all regretful, bid him go—
Our hearts beat one in mutual grief.

The olden paths I tread alone,
With tender memories haunted yet ;
He seeks in distant lands unknown
To banish memory's fond regret.

Effie.



THE LAST CAST.

THE ANGLER'S APOLOGY.

JUST one cast more ! how many a year,
Beside how many a pool and stream,
Beneath the falling leaves and sere,
I've sighed, reeled up, and dreamed my dream !

Dreamed of the sport since April first,
Her hands fulfilled of flowers and snow,
Adown the pastoral valieys burst
Where Ettrick and where Teviot flow.

Dreamed of the singing showers that break,
And sting the lochs, or near or far,
And rouse the trout, and stir 'the take'
From Urigil to Lochinvar.

Dreamed of the kind propitious sky
O'er Ari Innes brooding grey ;
The sea-trout, rushing at the fly,
Breaks the black wave with sudden spray !

* * * * *

Brief are man's days at best ; perchance
I waste my own, who have not seen
The castled palaces of France
Shine on the Loire in summer green.

And clear and fleet Eurotas still,
You tell me, laves his reedy shore,
And flows beneath his fabled hill
Where Dian drove the chase of yore.

And 'like a horse unbroken' yet
The yellow stream with rush and foam,
'Neath tower, and bridge, and parapet,
Girdles his ancient mistress, Rome !

I may not see them, but I doubt,
If seen, I'd find them half so fair
As ripples of the rising trout
That feed beneath the elms of Yair.

Nay, Spring I'd meet by Tweed or Ail,
And Summer by Loch Affynt's deep,
And Autumn in that lonely vale
Where wedded Avons westward sweep,

Or where, amid the empty fields,
Among the bracken of the glen,
Her yellow wreath October yields
To crown the crystal brows of Ken.

Unseen, Eurotas, southward steal,
Unknown, Alpheus, westward glide,
You never heard the ringing reel,
The music of the water-side !

Though gods have walked your woods among,
Though nymphs have fled your banks along ;
You speak not that familiar tongue
Tweed murmurs like my cradle song.

My cradle song,—nor other hymn
I'd choose, nor gentler requiem dear
Than Tweed's, that through death's twilight dim
Mourned in the latest Minstrel's ear !

Andrew Lang.



DEATH IN YARROW.

T'S no the fax month gane
Sin' a' our cares began,
Sin' she left us here alone,
Her callant and gudeman.

It was in the Spring she dee'd,
And now we're in the fa' ;
And fair we 've struggled wi't,
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

An awfu' blow was that—
The deed that nane can dree ;
And lang and fair we grat
For her we couldna see.
I 've aye been strong and fell,
And can stand a gey bit throw ;

But the laddie's no his fel'
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

In a' the water-gate
Ye couldna find his marrow;
There wafna' ane his mate
In Ettrick Shaws or Yarrow.

But he hafna' now the look
He used to hae ava';
He's grown fae little buik
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

I tak' him on my back
In ilka blink o' sun,
Rin roun' about the stack,
And mak' believe it's fun.
But weel he kens, I warrant,
There's something wrang for a',
He's turned fae auld-farrant
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

For when he's played his fill,
I canna help but see
How he draws the creepie-stool
Aye the closer to my knee ;
And he turns his muckle een
To the pictur' on the wa',
Wi' a face grown thin and keen
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

I mak' his pickle meat—
And I think I mak' it weel ;
And I warm his little feet
When I hap him i' the creel ;
And he kisses me fu' couthie,
For he downa' sleep at a'
Till he hauds up his bit mouthie,
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

And then I dander oot
When I can do nae mair,

And walk the hills aboot,
I dinna aye ken where ;
For my hairt's wi' ane abune,
And the ane is growin' twa,
He's dwined sae fair, sae fune,
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

And now the lang day's dune,
And the nicht's begun to fa',
And a bonnie harvest mune
Rises up on Bowerhope Law.
It's a bonnie warlt this,
But it's no for me at a',
For a'thing's gane amiss
Sin' his mother gaed awa'.

J. B. Selkirk.



TIME'S MAGIC.

SORROW'S discords I have known
Rhythmic grow at touch of time ;
What was once a piteous groan
Help to make a dainty rhyme.

Rocks that one time barred my way,
Thorns that tore me as I passed,
Seen by light of dying day
Make a picture at the last.

Say not, in this life of mine,
This was grievous, that was wrong ;
Sorrow by a law divine
Is the chosen seed of song.

True it is the griefs were great,
True it is the songs are small ;
Yet the verses compensate
For the troubles after all.

Tones that seem too harsh to-day
Make life's harmony complete ;
Yet I do not dare to say
Whether life is sad or sweet.

Catherine Grant Furley.



LITTLE JOCK ELLIOT.

MY castle is aye my ain,
An' herried it never fall be ;
For I maun fa' ere it's taen,
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?
Wi' my kute i' the rib o' my naig,
My swurd hingin' doun by my knee,
For man I am never afraid—
For wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Wha daur meddle wi' me ?
Wha daur meddle wi' me ?
Oh, my name it is Little Jock Elliot,
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Fierce Bothwell I vanquished clean,
Gar'd troopers an' fitmen flee ;
By my faith, I dumfoondert the Queen ;
But wha daur meddle wi' me ?
Alang by the Dead-Water Stank,
Jock Fenwick I met on the lea,
But his saddle was toom in a clank ;
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Where Keeldar meets wi' the Tyne,
Mysel' an' my kinsmen three,
We tackled the Percys nine —
They'll never mair meddle wi' me.
Sir Harry, wi' nimble brand,
He pricket my cap ajee,
But I cloured his head on the strand —
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?

The Cumberland rievers ken
The straike my arm can gie,

An' warily pafs the glen—
For wha daur meddle wi' me ?
I've chased the loons doun to Carlisle,
Jooket the raip on the Hairibee,
Where my naig nickert an' cocket his tail—
But wha daur meddle wi' me ?

My kinsmen are true, an' brawlie,
At glint o' an enemie,
Round Parke's auld turrets they rally,
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?
Then heigh for the tug an' the tussle,
Though the cost be Jethart tree;
Let the Queen an' her troopers gae whuffle !
Oh, wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Wha daur meddle wi' me ?

Oh, my name it is Little Jock Elliot,
An' wha daur meddle wi' me ?

M. G.



A VALLEY OF PEACE.

WE sat at Heaven's Gate one Sabbath-day,
Glory from out the inner splendour flowed,
Which lit the mountains, and the valleys glowed
A golden channel for the river's way.

Sunlight above, and the green vale below,
Our hearts were quiet, smitten through and
through
By gentle peace, which, falling as the dew,
Was soft as a sweet sunset's afterglow.

We crept to church across a wild-wood hill,
And down the valley to the meeting-place,
Where footsteps echoed, ere the preacher's face
Bade all be silent 'neath a Higher will.

The message came, a holy, happy word ;
And so, refreshed, home through the sultry noon,
Which now for us with many joys was strewn,
Like opening spring with carol of the bird.

Noon fell to evening, evening soft and calm
Fell round the day in glory of western fire ;
When folded in, each hope and each defire
Sank quiet as the woods then breathing balm.

So would we ever sit at Heaven's Gate,
That, when the voices from the world grow
loud,
Our spirits, bathed in silence, may be bowed,
In lowly patience on God's will to wait.

Robert Cochrane.



DUNNOTTAR.

[In Dunnottar Churchyard are the graves of the Covenanters
who perished in Dunnottar Castle in 1685.]

ON the dim churchyard, cold and grey,
Where nobler feet than mine have trod,
I mused alone at fall of day,
And wondered at the ways of God—
The shift and stir of things most still,
The changes that are sure to come :
Be moved, thou everlasting hill !
Thou clarion voice of Truth, be dumb !
The voice is hushed, and silently
The mountain falls into the sea.

And here in common slumbers bound,
They sleep, the pride of bygone days,

Nameless beneath their burial mound,
Or marked by word of wonted praise.
How close they gather to their rest :
Grim earls who fought for king and crown,
And knaves who deemed confusion best,
And traders tired of shop and town,
And fisher-folks, whose dream must be
Of brown sails bending o'er the sea.

And last, but surely first in love,
We place the names of those who fell
Their faith in direst strait to prove :
God gave them peace who fought so well ;
The hallowed peace they pray'd to win,
And welcomed with their parting breath ;
The peace that purged a nation's sin,
And brought to each a martyr's death :
Their blood a witness sure should be,
And lasting as the eternal sea.

Ah, well, 'tis much that they have been,
Though we are milder, wiser grown,
And skill'd, perchance, to read between
The broken lines on yonder stone.
We judge by what we are and feel,
Who move beyond the strain and stir
That roused of old the fiery zeal
Of Prelate and of Presbyter.

Now here, from unblest hatreds free,
They sleep together by the sea.

But when the sands of time are run,
And all our little changes sped,
And standing 'neath the broad white sun
Christ bids the grave give up its dead ;
Though kings may rise and pass unknown,
Too mean to walk at God's right hand,
Methinks beside the Father's Throne
Himself will place that faithful band,
And say, Behold, they died for Me
In yon old dungeon by the sea.

Douglas G. Barron.



MARTIAL IN TOWN.

LAST night, within the stifling train,
Lit by the foggy lamp o'erhead,
Sick of the sad Last News, I read
Verse of that joyous child of Spain,

Who dwelt when Rome was waxing cold,
Within the Roman din and smoke,
And like my heart to me they spoke,
These accents of his heart of old :—

*Brother, had we but time to live,
And fleet the careless hours together,
With all that leisure has to give
Of perfect life and peaceful weather,*

*The Rich Man's halls, the anxious faces,
The weary Forum, courts, and cases
Should know us not ; but quiet nooks,
But summer shade by field and well,
But country rides, and talk of books,
At home, with these, we fain would dwell !*

*Now neither lives, but day by day
Sees the suns wasting in the west,
And feels their flight, and doth delay
To lead the life he loveth best.*

So from thy city prison broke,
Martial, thy wail for life misspent,
And so, through London's noise and smoke
My heart replies to the lament.

For dear as Tagus with his gold,
And swifter Salo, were to thee,
So dear to me the woods that fold
The streams that circle Fernielea !

Andrew Lang.



THE SORROW OF THE SEA.

A DAY of fading light upon the sea,
Of sea-birds winging to their rocky
caves ;

And ever with its monotone to me,
The sorrow of the waves.

They leap and lash among the rocks and sands,
White-lipped, as with a guilty secret tossed,
For ever feeling with their foamy hands
For something they have lost.

Far out, and swaying in a sweet unrest,
A boat or two against the light is seen,
Dipping their sides within the liquid breast
Of waters dark and green.

And farther still, where sea and sky have kissed,
There falls, as if from heaven's own threshold,
 light
Upon faint hills that, half-enswathed in mist,
 Wait for the coming night.

But still, though all this life and motion meet,
 My thoughts are wingless and lie dead in me,
Or dimly stir to answer at my feet
 The sorrow of the sea.

Alexander Anderson.



AT EARLSTOUN.

A LOVELY moon through clouds of snow
Her tender light is streaming
On wood and hill and plain below,
And brook like silver gleaming ;
And many a scene around me lies
On which I love to ponder,
When Night, loved Night, with pearly eyes,
Invites me forth to wander.

The owl from Rhymer's mouldering tower
A dreary cry is pealing,
While neighbouring cliff and glen and bower
Their echoes are revealing ;

And distant murmurings come and go—

The soft winds sadly sighing
O'er Cowdenknowes, where, drooping low,
The bonnie broom is dying.

Round yonder hill, in softest light,

Fair Melrose now reposest,
Where Tweed unto the queen of night

His glittering wealth discloses ;
And silent as a waveless sea,

A silent vigil keeping,
Stands Dryburgh's hallowed pile, where he,
The mighty Bard, is sleeping.

The moonlit hills in slumber lie,

And dreamlike fill the distance,
And mingle with the clouds till sky
And earth have one existence ;

And mingle with the clouds as though
With heaven they held communion,
While peace from hill to vale below
Holds undisturbed dominion.

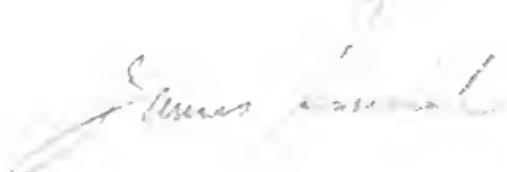
And with the tender light, so fair,
On cloud and landscape breaking,
A mystic influence fills the air,
The heart and soul awaking;
Till, glimmering like the stars of night,
Strange memories rise before me,
And thoughts that only come when bright
The still moon floateth o'er me:

Bright thoughts, the spirit-land their goal,
That come and go unspoken,
And memories that perplex the soul,
So interlinked and broken.

And though the Night's impressive power
May touch a spring of sadness,
Its mild accordance with the hour
Falls on the heart like gladness.

So with the hours that speed the night
I trace the hill, the meadow,
And linger 'mid the chequered light,
The dreamy light and shadow ;
Reluctant from a scene to part
I so devoutly cherish,
Though in the chambers of my heart
Its image ne'er can perish.

M. G.





ONLY AN INSECT.

I.

ON the crimson cloth
Of my study desk,
A lustrous moth
Poised statuesque.
Of a waxen mould
Were its light limbs shaped,
And in scales of gold
Its body was draped :
While its luminous wings
Were netted and veined
With silvery strings,
Or golden-grained,

Through whose filmy maze
In tremulous flight
Danced glittering rays
Of the gladsome light.

II.

On the desk hard by
A taper burned,
Towards which the eye
Of the insect turned.
In its vague little mind
A faint desire
Rose, undefined,
For the beautiful fire.
Lightly it spread
Each filken van ;
Then away it sped
For a moment's span.
And a strange delight
Lured on its course

With resistless might
Toward the central source :
And it followed the spell
Through an eddying maze,
Till it fluttered and fell
In the deadly blaze.

III.

Dazzled and stunned
By the scalding pain,
One moment it swooned,
Then rose again ;
And again the fire
Drew it on with its charms
To a living pyre
In its awful arms ;
And now it lies
On the table here
Before my eyes,
Shrivelled and sere.

IV.

As I sit and muse
On its fiery fate,
What themes abstruse
Might I meditate !
For the pangs that thrilled
Through its delicate frame
As its senses were filled
With the scorching flame,
A riddle enclose
That, living or dead,
In rhyme or in prose,
No seer has read.
' But a moth,' you cry,
' Is a thing so small !'
Ah, yes ; but why
Should it suffer at all ?
Why should a sob
For the vaguest smart

One moment throb
Through the tiniest heart?
Why, in the whole
Wide universe,
Should a single soul
Feel that primal curse?
Not all the throes
Of mightiest mind,
Nor the heaviest woes
Of humankind,
Are of deeper weight
In the riddle of things
Than that insect's fate
With the mangled wings.

v.

But if only I
In my simple song
Could tell you the Why
Of that one little wrong,

I could tell you more
Than the deepest page
Of saintliest lore
Or of wisest sage.
For never as yet
In its wordy strife
Could Philosophy get
At the import of life :
And Theology's laws
Have still to explain
The inscrutable cause
For the being of pain.
So I somehow fear
That in spite of both,
We are baffled here
By this one singed moth.

Grant Allen.



OUT IN THE STORM.

WHEN the winds and the waves have
wakened

To echo each other's moan,
When the ships are speeding to harbour,
She stands on the shore alone ;
Around her the storm-clouds gather,
And the white squall spreads its wings,
And the clamour of warring forces.
From the soul of the tempest springs.

Oh, wild and wide are the surges,
And strong are the powers of the air ;
And God—He knows, and none other,
What the human heart can bear.

The fear, and the hope, and the longing
Stir in her a vague unrest;
For the boy who was rocked on her bosom
Is borne on the ocean's breast.

But far as the waves can wander,
As fast as the winds can fly,
From the deepest depths of the ocean
To the highest heights of the sky,
Through the tears of a lonely vigil,
Through the gloom of a dumb despair,
To the ear of a pitying Father
Is wafted a mother's prayer.

Jeffie M. E. Saxby.



AGNES BROWN.

[Died 14th January 1820, aged eighty-eight; buried in Bolton Churchyard, near Haddington.]

HE spring birds sing, nor care if no one
listen,

The spring flowers open if the sun but
shine,

The spring winds wander where the green buds
glisten,

Through all the vale of Tyne.

And while, to music of the spring's returning,

Thy fair stream, Gifford, in the sunlight flows,
I, nursing tender thoughts, this sweet March morn-
ing,

Stand where the dead repose.

The snowdrop on the grass-green turf is blowing,
Its pure white chalice to the cold earth hung ;
The crocus with its heart of fire is glowing
As when old Homer fung.

And round me are the quaint-hewn gravestones,
giving,
With emblem rude, by generations read,
Their simple words of warning for the living,
Of promise for the dead.

But not that mausoleum, huge and hoary,
With elegiac marble, telling how
Its long-forgotten great ones died in glory,
Has drawn me hither now.

Ah, no !—With reverence meet from these I turn :
They had what wealth could bring or love supply,
Like thousands such, who, born as they were born,
Live, have their day, and die.

Let peace be theirs ! It is a fairer meed,
A more enduring halo of renown,
That glorifies this grave, o'er which I read
The name of AGNES BROWN.

A peasant name, befitting peasant tongue :
How lives it longer than an autumn moon ?
'Twas hers, the mother of the Bard who sung
The banks and braes of Doon.

Here in this alien ground her ashes lie,
Far from her native haunts on Carrick shore,
Far from where first she felt a mother's joy
O'er the brave child she bore.

Ah, who can tell the thoughts that on her prest,
As o'er his cradle-bed she bent in bliss,
Or gave from the sweet fountains of her breast
The life that nourished his ?

Perhaps in prescient vision came to her
Some shadowings of the glory yet afar—
Of that fierce storm, whence rose, serene and clear,
His never-setting star.

But dreamt she ever, as she sang to still
His infant heart in slumber sweet and long,
That he who silent lay the while, should fill
Half the round world with song ?

Yet so he filled it ; and she lived to see
The Singer, chapleted with laurel, stand,
Upon his lips that wondrous melody
Which thrilled his native land.

She saw, too, when had passed the Singer's breath,
A nation's proud heart throbbing at his name,
Forgetting, in the pitying light of death,
Whatever was of blame.

Oh, may we hope she heard not, even afar,
The screamings of that vulture-brood who tear
The heart from out the dead, and meanly mar
The fame they may not share !

Who would not wish that her long day's decline
Had peacefullest setting, unsuffused with tears,
Who bore to Scotland him, our Bard divine,
Immortal as the years ?

He sleeps among the eternal ; nothing mars
His rest, nor ever pang to him returns :
Write, too, her epitaph among the stars,
MOTHER OF ROBERT BURNS !

John Russell.



THE CHILDREN'S PICNIC.

DHEY are romping about, the darlings,
Through the tufted grass and the flowers ;
God bless them, the innocent darlings,
In the glee of their joyous hours !
There is sunshine without, they have funshine
within,
And their glad hearts pour music in laughter and
din ;
Let them feast of life's joys ere its battles begin,
Or the cloud of its troubling lowers.

The soft summer winds are playing
With the links of their waving hair,

And on each flushed cheek are laying
The tints of the roses fair ;
And innocence, jubilant, looks from their eyes,
Whose brightness makes brighter the cheek's ruddy
dyes :
Alas ! that ripe years should bring sadness and sighs,
And wither the blossoming there.

Oh, my spirit leaps light with you, darlings,
And fain would I join in your glee,
But that one who was once like you, darlings,
With pale face forbids it to be !
Far down in my heart's holiest memories, two eyes,
Whose light is the light of no earthly skies,
Through the glistening tear that there death-frozen
lies,
Imploringly looketh to me.

And I turn me away from you, darlings,
For a sickness is filling my breast,

And my griefs that have slumbered long, darlings,
Are breaking again from their rest.
I turn to the solitudes, there to conceal
The emotions too tender and pure to reveal,
Where, with Nature alone, my bruised spirit may
kneel,
And its troubles and woes be confest.

Yet rejoice in your merriment, darlings,
Think not of this grieving of mine;
This world still is beautiful, darlings,
So let its pure pleasures be thine.
God's love 's in the sunshine that gladdens the hills,
In the songs of the birds, in the flowers and the rills,
Then shout in your joy, for their influence that fills
Your young hearts with delight is divine.

Thomas Kennedy.



THE VISION OF TRUTH.

 SAT beside a rippling stream,
 The air was bright and pure and
 warm,

Without a jarring sound to harm
 The pensive stillness of my dream.

I thought myself again a youth,
 I thought of days, now long gone by,
 When, filled with aspirations high,
 I wandered forth in quest of Truth.

I sought her in what sages said ;
 And in the books they left behind—
 Rich products of the human mind—
 I held communion with the dead.

I sought her where, ere half his age,
Old Scotia's poet breathed his last ;
And where, with his conceptions vast,
There lived and wrote the 'Chelsea sage.'

I sought her 'mid the sacred shrines
Where Stratford's marvellous poet lies ;
I sought her where, with sightless eyes,
The British Homer penned his lines.

And, weary of my native shore,
Where wealth appeared the leading aim,
Or eager thirst for transient fame,
Which, never sated, cries for more,

I sought her where the dew distils
On Luther's grave, on Goethe's home ;
I sought her where eternal Rome
Stands proudly on her seven hills.

I sought her in that city's halls
Where Socrates and Plato stood
Together in their search for good,
And taught the youth within its walls.

I sought her in that sacred land,
Most blest, I thought, on earth below,
Where, all who read the Scriptures know,
The Master trained His little band.

I sought to know the Brahmin's creed,
What Buddha taught in ancient times,
And what men thought in sunny climes
Where Zoroaster taught the Mede.

I sought her in that country, full
Of people wondrous from of old,
And where, even yet, 'tis proudly told,
Confucius taught the 'golden rule.'

I found her not. At least I thought
I should the light more clearly see ;
I longed to leave the earth, and flee
To find out that fair form I sought.

Again I homeward bent my way,
Again I oped the well-known door,
And to the murmuring sea once more
I listened as in youth's bright day.

And sitting in my father's chair,
I mused upon my little life ;
What meaneth all the mortal strife,
The gnawing pain, the secret care ?

I asked myself, in growing fear,
What fate can be in store for those
Whose lives begin, continue, close,
Without a thought of God to cheer ?

I lost myself in mazy trance,
The vastness overwhelmed my soul,
As, thinking of the worlds that roll,
I felt my insignificance.

I sank as in a billowy sea,
With dread annihilation nigh,
And from my soul arose the cry,
'Let there be light, if light there be.'

And, lo, like vision of the night,
As if in answer to my prayer,
Appeared a Being wondrous fair,
And clothed with more than earthly light.

'My son,' she said, with gentle voice,
'You sought me far, you sought me wide,
And now you see me by your side,
Rise up then, Doubter, and rejoice.'

‘ You sought me well ; you have done right
To search for me ; where’er they go,
The highest quest that men can know
Is Truth, in all her beauty bright.

‘ The meaning full you do not know
Of that one struggling, painful life,
Of that one death ’mid fiendish strife,
Which Love Divine endured below.

‘ Shut in by Nature’s boundary line,
You cannot, with your feeble sense,
Pretend to know Omnipotence,
Or measure out the mind Divine.

‘ But when you see the perfect whole,
Of all its present mystery bared,
You then will wonder that you dared
To doubt the great, unerring Soul,

‘ That watches o’er the sparrow’s fall,
That guides the insect, tends the flower,
Whose justice, goodness, love, and power
Are everywhere, are all in all.

‘ Think truly ; there the secret lies
Of noble deeds, of purpose sure,
Of lives exalted, noble, pure,
The strength of all the great and wise.

‘ Know well thyself : the man who strives
The hearts and souls of men to reach,
Must from his own experience teach
The secret of all noble lives.

‘ Strive ever to attain the true,
As onward in your life you move,
Till in complete and perfect love
You live with me, and I with you.

‘ My name is Truth, and Truth is Love,
And Love is God, and God is all ;
Believe in this, you will not fall ;
And trust me where you cannot prove.’

The vision fled ; her words remained ;
I rose a new, an altered man ;
I saw a glimpse of one great plan,
And faith, and hope, and peace regained.

And so my dark forebodings fell ;
And in the evening of my life
I look beyond the sin and strife,
And rest in this, that ‘ all is well.’

James H. Bryden.



LIFE'S ENIGMA.

ONLY a long deep silence,
And a mist that's over the heart ;
And the world is full of the shadows
That out of my dreamland start.

Away are the keen heart-longings,
And away on an unseen track ;
For I listen the live-long Morrow,
And they bring me no answer back.

And the mist winds round me closer,
And the silence is ill to bear,

And the soul looks out on the twilight,
Weary and wan with its care.

For it hears the wind-voice sighing
Where the long pine-branches wave,
And it ever speaks to the spirit
Of the past that 's laid in the grave.

And the sad strains waken yearning,
A yearning that will not be ;
And the sense that I cannot fathom
Comes out of my Life to me.

And I stand in the great Creation,
Like a child by the altar-stair,
While the grand eternal anthem
Dies into the plaintive prayer.

For I cannot grasp life's meaning,
Or tell of the smallest thing ;
And the higher I climb, the deeper
The mysteries round me cling.

And I stand in the great Creation
Like a child by the mighty sea ;
And what of the depths when the shallows
Are more than enough for me ?

And ever it comes ; and ever,
The more that I see, seems the less
The knowledge of Life and of Being,
Of earth and its earnestness.

Dick.



A WEAVER'S SONG.

O and fro, to and fro,
With its swift rebound doth the shuttle go ;
The warp-threads rise, the warp-threads fall,
Till a quaint fair pattern binds them all.
Early and late, early and late,
Slender warp-thread and woof-thread mate.

To and fro, to and fro,
The shuttle of Chance through our life doth go ;
Our passions are threads that rise and fall,
Till a strange sad pattern binds them all.
Early and late, early and late,
The shuttle of Chance weaves the web of Fate.

Catherine Grant Furley.



YE'RE NEARER GOD, MY BAIRNIE.

YE'RE nearer God, my bairnie,
Than when ye were wi' me;
An' though we noo hae pairtit,
It's only for a wee.

An' ilka nicht that I lie doon,
Before I steek my e'e,
My heart gies thanks that I hae come
A day's march nearer thee.

Ower guid wert thou, my bairnie!
Ower guid to bide wi' me;
I only got ye, bairnie,
To haud ye for a wee.

An' while I held ye to my heart,
Sae dear wert thou to me,
I thocht if ye were askit back—
My bairnie!—I wad dee.

I wearied for the sunny days,
I wearied for them fair;
I watch'd the dreary winter-clouds
Wi' silent dread an' care.

Dark fears cam' creepin' ower me,
Whan cam' the frost an' snaw;
But bitter, bitter woe was mine
Before they gaed awa.

'Twas awfu' fair, my bairnie,
'Twas awfu' fair to pairt;
An' oh! it's awfu' fair to live,
An' hae a broken heart!

But safe are ye, my bairnie !
The gentle heart o' thine
Will never, never ken the woe
That wrings this heart o' mine.

The warld 's noo dark, my bairnie,
It 's dark an' drear to me,
For gane is a' the happiness
That I hae haen wi' thee.

Although I ken ye 're faulded safe,
An' Wisdom says to me,
That I 'sud gladly thole what 's gien
Sic happiness to thee,'

It 's ill to see through blindin' tears
A truth sae fair to learn ;
Fain, fain wad I hae keepit thee,
My bonnie, bonnie bairn !

Jeffie D. M. Morton.



LOVE.

A SONNET.

AS one who, scanning close the midnight sky,
Where holds each orb its own appointed place,
Should haply chance, by fortune's special grace,
When least he hoped such wonder, to descry
Some star unseen before by mortal eye,
And, having seen it for a little space,
Should straightway lose thereof all sight and
trace ;
But soul-enamour'd of its matchless dye,
Should heed no more at all the meaner crew

Of nightly stars that hold their steadfast state,
But gaze and gaze unwearied all night through
At one small patch of darkness, hoping fate
Would bring once more that one sole star to
view :—
Even so I saw thy love, and so I wait.

Hugh A. Webster.



LEAL HEART LO'ES LANG.

OH, the soft wind sighed o'er the grassy
knowe,
Where the wee birds warbled sweet,
And the roses bloomed upon ilka bough,
And the days were fair as fleet ;
And the laddie lilted a dream-taught sang :
‘Leal heart lo’es lang.’

Under the roots o’ the wild-rose tree
They laid the puir lad to rest,
And the low winds moaned frae the scented lea,
And the birdies built a nest ;
And the birds, and the breeze, and the blossoms
sang,
‘Leal heart lo’es lang.’

Nae dreams had he there ; but when years were
gane,

She came by that quiet place ;
Her steps they were slow, and she gaed her lane,
And pale was her faded face :
And the tear-drops fell as she sadly sang,
‘ Leal heart lo’es lang.’

Jeffie M. E. Saxby.



LOVE'S FLAME.

COME, Shepherd, now my lute 's in tune,
What would you I should sing or play ?
Some measure laden sweet as June
With languorous odours ? Tell me, pray.
Some air to trickle through your soul,
Like dewdrops in the rose's bowl ?
No ! say'st thou so ?
Ah then, love's tender flame,
Thou haft not known, perhaps, except in name !

At gloaming by that pleasant rill
Which murmurs to the murmuring shore,
Hast never waited on the hill
Beneath the spreading sycamore,

And, listening for her coming feet,
Heard through thy lips thine own heart beat ?

No ! say'st thou so ?

Ah then, love's quivering flame,
Thou hast not known it, Shepherd, but in name !

Haft never met by ford or field

That maiden, fresh and free from blame,
Beneath whose gaze thy pulses reeled

With sense of unaccustomed shame ?

And when to speak you would have come,
Found suddenly that you were dumb !

No ! say'st thou so ?

Ah then, love's conquering flame
Thou hast not known as yet, except in name !

Say, hast thou never heard a voice

That seemed to you so strange and new,
It made all other sounds but noise
Compared to that you listened to ?

As if it held in every breath
The issues of your life or death ?

No ! say'st thou so ?

Ah then, love's piercing flame,
Thou never canst have known it but in name !

Shepherd, adieu ! my song is done !

Go to thy bacon and thy beans ;
Why should I sing or play to one
Who does not know what Music means ?
'Tis love's own language, and as yet
You do not know your alphabet ;

No ! Shepherd, no !
To you, love's tender flame
Has never been revealed, except in name !

J. B. Selkirk.



SAINT MARY'S LAKE.

A WAY from all the restless street,
The whirlpool of the toiling race,
Where Traffic, in the dusty heat,
Toils with the sweat upon his face.

Away from this, and far away,
We fight the strong wind on the hill,
Or rest upon the bracken'd brae,
And shape our dreamland as we will.

What boon to lie, as now I lie,
And see in silver at my feet
Saint Mary's Lake, as if the sky
Had fallen between those hills so sweet,

And this old churchyard on the hill,
That keeps the green graves of the dead,
So calm and sweet, so lone and still,
And but the blue sky overhead.

Ah ! here they lie, the simple race,
Who lived their little flight of years,
Then laid them in this quiet place,
At rest for ever from their fears.

The winds sing as they sang to them,
The bracken changes as of old,
The hills still wear their diadem
Of heather and the sunset's gold.

No change in these ; the waves still break
In ripple or in foam upon
The green shores of Saint Mary's Lake,
As in the ages dead and gone.

Beneath the hills whose shadows seem
Fit haunt for lonely sounds that be,
Flows, half in sunshine, Yarrow stream,
The spirit of all I hear and see.

Thou Yarrow of my early dreams,
When fancy heard thee murmur on,
A light has passed from other streams,
And deepens all thy haunting tone.

It crowns thee with a magic dower ;
It makes thy windings ever sweet ;
The Mary Scott of Dryhope Tower
Still follows thee with unseen feet.

Her name is wed to thine ; the vale
Is witness as thou rollest on,
And with thee all the tender wail
Of song, with sorrow in its tone.

Men pass from thee ; the years prolong
 No name of theirs for ear or eye ;
But she—a little whirl of song
 Hath caught her, and she cannot die.

And, lying on the bracken'd hill,
 The sunshine on my brow, to-day,
The old Love-ballad echoes still
 In throbs that will not pass away.

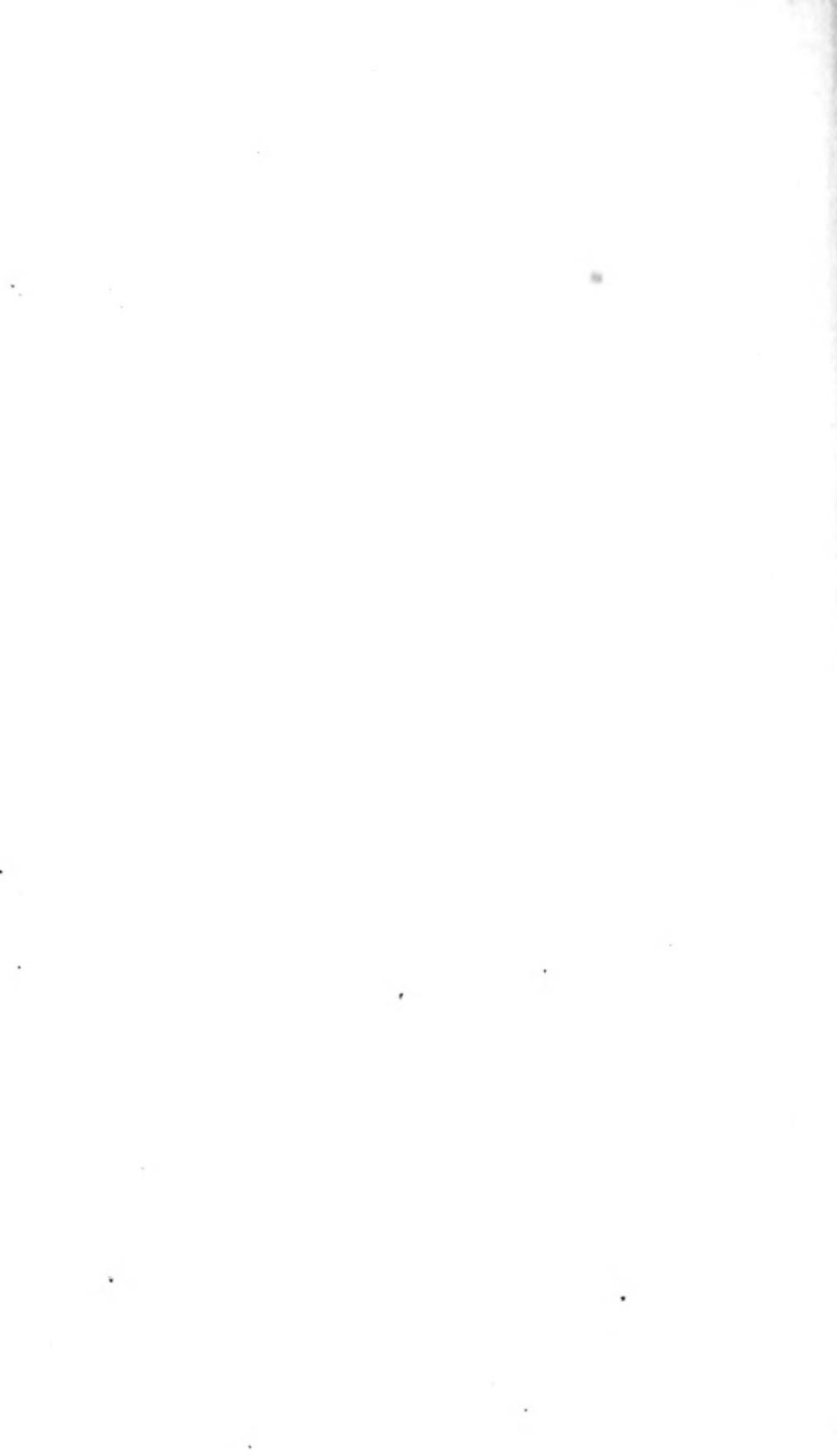
And as I listen, like a dream
 That changes into softer things,
Saint Mary's Lake and Yarrow stream
 Take all the sorrow which it sings.

Alexander Anderson.

L'ENVOI.

*What time the merle and mavis sing,
We twine this Garland of the Spring :
The rose of Love, of roses chief,
Dark-blent with Sorrow's cypress-leaf,
And odorous violets, penfive-eyed,
And primrose of the green hillside :
Gathered from fields afar and near,
From western Brantwood's lovely mere.
From where the streets of London rear,
From distant Devon's classic shore,
From grey heights by the swelling Forth
Where fits the City of the North,
From Border vales that yield their fame
To his the Mighty Minstrel's name.*
—*If, in these buds and blossoms, aught
Should move thy mind to sweeter thought,
Or wake in thee thy better part,
Then, Reader, wear them on thy heart.*

J. R.



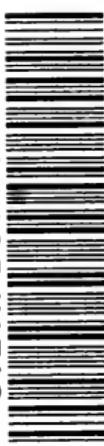


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